DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 281 295 EA 019 359

AUTHOR Green, Charles A.
TITLE Evaluation of the 1984-85 High School Intervention Center Program.
INSTITUTION Detroit Public Schools, MI. Office of Instructional Improvement.
PUB DATE Nov 85
NOTE 27p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Academic Achievement; *Attendance; Attendance Patterns; Demonstration Programs; *Educational Assessment; Federal Programs; High School Students; Individualized Education Programs; Interviews; Program Effectiveness; *Program Evaluation; Questionnaires; Secondary Education; Student Attitudes; Student Behavior; Student Needs; *Student School Relationship; Summative Evaluation; Teacher Improvement
IDENTIFIERS *Detroit Public Schools MI; *Education Consolidation Improvement Act Chapter 1

ABSTRACT

This report presents findings of a two-part evaluation study of the 1984-85 High School Intervention Center Program operational for 11 Detroit, Michigan, schools. Evaluation of program impact on students' attendance and scholarship and a process evaluation of program strengths and weaknesses were conducted by data comparison and by participant questionnaires and interviews. The programs, established for students performing below grade level in English and mathematics and exhibiting truancy, targeted 9th and 10th graders for improvement in basic skills. Students enrolled for one semester in language arts, mathematics, and group guidance courses conducted at 11 centers. The focus was on student needs in small group settings and developing self-awareness and problem-solving skills. Major findings, listed in tables, are as follows: (1) Students' school attendance (36 percent absence rate) showed no improvement after program participation; (2) attendance at centers was higher than at school; (3) attendance of 111 students (45 percent) improved, but that of 136 students (55 percent) did not improve; (4) the program had little influence on academic achievement; and (5) students praised staff for efforts to improve attendance. Excerpts of responses to interview questions are provided in the report's process evaluation findings. Recommendations include students taking classes in their regular grade, improved screening and placement of students and program teachers, program extension to two semesters, and developing an attendance policy. (CJH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED281295

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Moore

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EVALUATION OF THE 1984-85 HIGH SCHOOL INTERVENTION CENTER PROGRAM

Charles A. Green

Evaluation and Testing Department
Office of Instructional Improvement
Detroit Public Schools

November, 1985

EA 019 359

EVALUATION OF THE 1984-85 HIGH SCHOOL
INTERVENTION CENTER PROGRAM

Abstract

The High School Intervention Centers were established to provide an alternative for high school students who are identified as performing below grade level in English and mathematics, and who exhibit the self-defeating behavior of truancy. The program provides an opportunity for ninth and tenth graders to improve student achievement in basic skills, thereby increasing school attendance and decreasing the potential for school failure and dropout.

The major findings can be summarized as in the following statements.

1. Student attendance in their regular schools showed no improvement after participation in the program.

2. Student attendance at the centers was better than their regular school attendance.

3. One hundred eleven students (45 percent) improved their attendance after treatment; however, 136 (55 percent) did not improve.

4. The program had little impact on academic achievement.

5. Students praised the staff for their efforts to improve student attendance.

Evaluation and Testing Department
Office of Instructional Improvement
Detroit Public Schools

November, 1985

HIGH SCHOOL INTERVENTION CENTER PROGRAM

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose(s) and Features of the Program

The High School Intervention Centers were established to provide an alternative for high school students who are identified as performing below grade level in English and mathematics, and who exhibit the self-defeating behavior of truancy. The program provides an opportunity for ninth and tenth graders to improve student achievement in the basic skills, thereby increasing school attendance and decreasing the potential for school failure and dropout.

Students were referred to the High School Intervention Center (HSIC) Program for one semester during the 1984-85 school year by the high school principals. They were enrolled in three classes: Language Arts, mathematics, and group guidance. All classes were focused on the individual needs of students in small group settings, and an intensive goal-directed guidance mode was used to assist students in acquiring specific self-awareness skills and effective problem-solving techniques.

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation of participating students' attendance and scholarship involved two separate studies. The first was an investigation of student absence rates and grade point averages before and after the period of enrollment at the High School Intervention Centers. The second was a study of student attendance and grade point averages while enrolled at the centers.

The major purpose of the process evaluation of the HSIC Program was to identify strengths and weaknesses in the program's policies and procedures. This evaluation was based on results of questionnaires and group interviews administered to first semester participants.

Findings and Recommendations

The major findings of the evaluation of the 1984-85 High School Intervention Center Program can be summarized as in the following statements.

1. Students' attendance in their regular schools showed no improvement after participation in the program.

2. Student attendance at the centers was better than their regular school attendance.

3. The program appeared to be successful for 111 students (45 percent) who improved their attendance after treatment. However, 136 students (55 percent) did not show improvement.

4. The HSIC Program seemed to have little impact on academic achievement. Both pre- and post-treatment grade point averages were below a "D" average. However, students did better (C-) while in the program.

5. Student responses to questionnaires and group interviews showed that the HSIC staff was highly praised for their efforts to improve student attendance.

As an outcome of the evidence obtained in the evaluation of the HSIC Program, the following recommendations are urged:

1. It is suggested that the program be restructured whereby all participating students can take classes in their regular grade.

2. Improve screening and placement of students, and also teachers in the program.

3. Extend the length of the program to two semesters.

4. There should be specific time lines for enrollment. Late entries can be detrimental to program cohesiveness.

5. Students who demonstrate poor participation should be dropped after a reasonable time. An attendance policy should be developed for final actions.

CAG/fc:11/85

EVALUATION OF THE 1984-85 HIGH SCHOOL
INTERVENTION CENTER PROGRAM

Introduction

The High School Intervention Centers were established to provide an alternative for high school students who are identified as performing below grade level in English and mathematics, and who exhibit the self-defeating behavior of truancy. The program provides an opportunity for ninth and tenth graders to improve student achievement in the basic skills, thereby increasing school attendance and decreasing the potential for school failure and dropout.

Students were referred to the High School Intervention Center (HSIC) Program for one semester during the 1984-85 school year by the high school principals. They were enrolled in three classes: Language Arts, mathematics, and group guidance. All classes were focused on the individual needs of students in small group settings, and an intensive goal-directed guidance mode was used to assist students in acquiring specific self-awareness skills and effective problem-solving techniques.

Students who successfully participate in the program are expected to:

1. strengthen their basic competencies in mathematics and language arts;
2. acquire a better understanding of themselves and their academic potential; and
3. develop problem-solving techniques that will improve school performance and school attendance.

The HSIC Program for 1984-85 was funded through E.C.I.A., Chapter 1, and centers were operational for Chapter 1 students in eleven Detroit high schools. Targeted students must meet Chapter 1 guidelines and appear on the

school's Chapter 1 list. Targeted students are defined as those who have a high incidence of underachievement with priority being given to ninth and tenth graders with attendance problems.

The school district believed that students' poor academic achievement and attendance patterns could be improved through the collaborative efforts of the students, parents, high schools, and the High School Intervention Center Program.

This report presents findings of a two-part evaluation of the 1984-85 HSIC Program. The first part was a study of the program's impact on student attendance and scholarship. The second part was a process evaluation study of the program.

Program Impact on Participating Students' Attendance and Scholarship

The evaluation of participating students' attendance and scholarship involved two separate studies. The first was an investigation of student absence rates and grade point averages before and after the period of enrollment at the High School Intervention Centers. The second was a study of student attendance and grade point averages while enrolled at the High School Intervention Centers.

Attendance and Scholarship Before and After Enrollment at the High School Intervention Centers

To determine whether High School Intervention Center participation resulted in improved student attendance and scholarship after a semester of enrollment at the centers, a study of students' attendance and scholarship

was conducted. In this study, attendance and scholarship data were collected for students who attended each of the 11 High School Intervention Centers during the first semester of the 1984-85 school year.

In Table 1 are reported average pre- and post-treatment absence rates for students who participated in the HSIC Program at their schools through the first semester of the school year 1984-85, and attended the regular school program at the same school through the full second semester of the 1984-85 year. Data are reported for each school having an intervention center, and for the total program across all 11 schools. In Table 1 are also reported the numbers of students who did not complete the post-treatment semester at their schools because they were suspended, transferred or dropped out.

The major finding was that the average rate for participating students (for whom pre and post measures were appropriate) was the same rate of absences after program treatment as it was before program treatment. Total project results show a .36 (36 percent) average rate of absence before program participation and the same absence rate after participation. A school by school examination of the results reveals increased rates of absence in five schools and decreased rates for six schools.

Further analysis of the pre- and post-treatment absence rates (Table 2) showed that participants who were absent 20 days or less the semester before entering the program had an average pre-treatment absence rate of .15 (15 percent). However, post-treatment data show the average absence rate was .26, an eleven percent increase over the pre-treatment rate. Those participants who were absent 21 days or more the semester before entering the

TABLE 1

PRE- AND POST-TREATMENT SEMESTER ABSENCE RATES* OF FIRST SEMESTER PARTICIPANTS IN THE HIGH SCHOOL INTERVENTION CENTER PROGRAM FOR 1984-85

School	No. of Students Completing Post-Treatment Semester	Average Absence Rates		No. of Students Not Completing Post-Treatment Semester
		Pre-Treatment	Post-Treatment	
Central	18	.36	.38	6
Chadsey	16	.38	.35	12
Cooley	38	.30	.34	0
Kettering	26	.30	.26	2
King	18	.42	.53	9
Mackenzie	16	.47	.44	3
Murray-Wright	29	.23	.31	7
Northern	22	.36	.30	12
Northwestern	29	.41	.34	6
Southeastern	21	.51	.40	4
Western	14	.37	.45	6
Total Project	247	.36	.36	67

*Average pre-treatment absence rates are based on students' regular school attendance in the second semester of the 1983-84 school year, the semester before their term of participation in the program. Post-treatment absence rates are based on their attendance in the second semester, 1984-85, the semester after their term of participation.

The reported average absence rates for both the pre- and post-treatment semesters were derived as follows. First, each student's absence rate was computed by dividing the total of his/her individual class absences by the number of classes, and then dividing the result by the number of school days in the semester. The average absence rate for each school is simply the average of the school's individual student absence rates. The total project average absence rate is the average of the rates for all students at all eleven schools.

program had an average pre-treatment absence rate of .43 (43 percent). After treatment, their average rate decreased to .40, a three percent decrease.

TABLE 2

PRE- AND POST-TREATMENT ABSENCE RATES OF STUDENTS ABSENT 20 DAYS OR LESS AND OF THOSE ABSENT 21 DAYS OR MORE IN THE SEMESTER BEFORE ENROLLMENT IN THE PROGRAM

No. of Days Absent Prior to Treatment	Number of Students	Average Absence Rates	
		Pre-Treatment	Post-Treatment
20 Days or Less	63	.15	.26
21 Days or More	184	.43	.40

TABLE 3

PRE- AND POST-TREATMENT AVERAGE ABSENCE RATES OF STUDENTS WHO MADE IMPROVEMENTS AND WHO DID NOT MAKE IMPROVEMENTS IN ATTENDANCE AFTER PROGRAM TREATMENT

	Number of Students	Average Absence Rates	
		Pre-Treatment	Post-Treatment
Students Who Improved Attendance	111	.44	.25
Students Who Did Not Improve Attendance	136	.30	.44

Table 3 shows that 111 students (45 percent) improved their attendance after program treatment. Their pre-treatment average absence rate was .44 (44 percent). However, after treatment, the average absence rate was .25, a 19 percent improvement in attendance. The data also indicate that 136

participants (55 percent) did not show improvements in attendance after program treatment. Their pre-treatment average absence rate was .30. After treatment, their average absence rate was .44, a 14 percent increase in absence rate.

In Table 4 are presented the pre- and post-treatment grade point averages of the first semester participants in the HSIC Program for 1984-85. The pre-treatment grade point averages are based on students' final marks for the semester before treatment. The post-treatment grade point averages are based on students' final marks for the semester after treatment. For each student a grade point average was computed by dividing the sum of the grade points for each class scholarship mark (A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1, E = 0) by the number of classes. The reported grade point average for each school is the average of that school's individual student's grade point average.

The major finding was that the pre-treatment grade point average for participating students (for whom pre and post measures were appropriate) was .70 and the post-treatment grade point average was .82. Both pre and post grade point averages were below a "D" average. Participants in seven schools showed improvement in their grade point averages. However, in most cases, the degree of improvement was slight.

TABLE 4

PRE- AND POST-TREATMENT GRADE POINT AVERAGES OF FIRST SEMESTER PARTICIPANTS IN THE HIGH SCHOOL INTERVENTION CENTER PROGRAM DURING THE 1984-85 SCHOOL YEAR

School	No. of Students	Grade Point Averages	
		Pre-Treatment	Post-Treatment
Central	18	.66	.61
Chadsey	16	.51	.89
Cooley	38	.81	.74
Kettering	26	1.50	1.31
King	18	.20	.20
Mackenzie	16	.35	.45
Murray-Wright	29	.81	.92
Northern	22	.98	1.38
Northwestern	29	.40	.55
Southeastern	21	.37	1.02
Western	14	.65	.67
Grand Total	247	.70	.82

Attendance and Scholarship During Enrollment
At the Intervention Centers

The study of students' attendance at the centers during the first semester of the 1984-85 school year was based on daily records of absences. Only students who enrolled in the program during August and September were included in the study. In Table 5 are presented the average rates of absences for students for each participating school and for the total aggregation of students.

The major finding was that the average rate of absence of participating students from the center programs was .22 (22 percent). This rate was lower than their average rates of absence from school before participation (.36)

TABLE 5

AVERAGE INTERVENTION CENTER ABSENCE RATES*
OF FIRST SEMESTER PARTICIPANTS IN
THE 1984-85 PROGRAM

School	Number of Students	Average Absence Rate
Central	15	.22
Chadsey	36	.35
Cooley	39	.17
Kettering	39	.17
King	26	.24
Mackenzie	32	.25
Murray-Wright	39	.20
Northern	18	.22
Northwestern	40	.21
Southeastern	34	.32
Western	26	.26
Grand Total	344	.22

*The reported average intervention center absence rates were derived as follows. First, each student's absence rate was computed by dividing the total of his/her individual class absences by the number of classes, and then dividing the result by the number of days enrolled. The average absence rate for each school is simply the average of the school's individual student absence rates. The total project average absence rate is the average of the rates for all students in all eleven schools.

and after program participation (.36). The data also reveal that both Cooley and Kettering registered the lowest absence rates (.17), while those for Chadsey (.35) and Southeastern (.32) were the highest.

Table 6 reveals that the grade point averages of the first semester participants while in the High School Intervention Center Program was 1.7 (C-). Only at two schools, Mackenzie (2.2) and Northern (2.1), did students maintain "C" averages.

TABLE 6

GRADE POINT AVERAGES OF THE FIRST SEMESTER, 1984-85, PARTICIPANTS WHILE ENROLLED IN THE HIGH SCHOOL INTERVENTION CENTER PROGRAM

School	No. of Students	Grade Point Averages
Central	15	1.7
Chadsey	36	1.7
Cooley	39	1.7
Kettering	39	1.7
King	26	1.7
Mackenzie	32	2.2
Murray-Wright	39	1.6
Northern	18	2.1
Northwestern	40	1.6
Southeastern	34	1.9
Western	26	1.5
Grand Total	344	1.7

Process Evaluation Findings

The major purpose of the process evaluation of the High School Intervention Centers (HSIC) was to identify strengths and weaknesses in the program's policies and procedures. This evaluation was based on results of questionnaires and group interviews administered to the first semester participants of the 1984-85 school year. A questionnaire was administered in December, 1984, to students in each of the eleven centers. Also, the evaluator interviewed groups of ten to fifteen students in three selected centers. The interview questions were the same as those asked in the questionnaires. A summary of the results follows.

QUESTION 1. What do you like most about the High School Intervention Center Program?

Questionnaire Responses (Question 1):

Three hundred six students from the 11 Intervention Centers responded to the above question. Of the 306, 123 students (40 percent) stated that the teachers and counselors were the best liked features of the program. Students stated that they liked the way the staff was trying to improve their attendance. One student said, "The counseling gives the students inspiration to make something out of themselves." Another said, "The teachers explain the work much better than regular teachers." One student also indicated a dramatic improvement in self-concept: "I like the teachers that work with me because they make me feel like me again. I don't feel like a loser anymore. I feel like my feet have been put back on the right track."

Other typical responses were:

- I like the teachers. They help you understand more. They don't rush into things. They gradually go at it. They take special interest in each student.

- I like everything about the program. Most of all I like the staff because they care about what happens to you. They try to make you come by calling your house and sending letters to your house. I think if they care about you, you should also care too.

- The counseling provides many answers to life's questions.

The second most liked feature was that the program helped improve students' attendance (65 or 21 percent). Typical responses were:

- This program is fun and educational and at the same time it makes me come to school every day, and I learn more and I am grateful.

- It helps me stop skipping and gives me confidence.

- I think it is a good attendance program because it is working and students are coming to school.

Getting out of school early as a primary response was the third most liked feature of the program. Typical responses were:

- I like getting out of school early, the teachers in the program, and the students.

- It has short hours and the teachers care about you.

- I like the idea of only three classes which are only an hour and twenty minutes long.

Other liked aspects of the program were: self-improvement, the counseling process, getting a second chance, getting better grades, and the field trips. Several illustrative responses were:

- I like the Intervention Program because it has helped me to deal with my problems better and not run away from them.

- The way we all sit around the table and talk things out that will help us to be a better person, and get a better job.

- It gave me and some classmates a second chance to get ourself together and do right and don't get in trouble over little stuff like skipping and fighting.

- It helped me in a lot of ways; most of all it helped me with my grades and at home.

Group Interview Responses (Question 1):

Students expressed a deep feeling of admiration and appreciation for the HSIC staff. Students stated that teachers "take up more time with you;" "they make it fun, not boring;" "they give you fair work;" "they continue to remind us how important it is to stay in school." These statements exemplify the impact of caring teachers on students. Other typical responses were:

- If you feel that you let yourself down, the teachers don't feel that way; they continue to help you.

- You get more attention, more help than you get in the regular school.

- They help you to see the chain of success. Your motivation, your attitude, your attendance, your punctuality , and your knowledge. You are supposed to use it.

Four students were pleased with the hours of the program. They liked getting out of school early. Three students said, "We get better attendance here," and three students also felt that the program was helpful in getting students to come back to school. One student remarked, "Without this program, half of the students would be at home. They wouldn't come to school."

Two students stated that "It is easy to make good grades in the program," and two other students also felt that the work was easy.

Additional responses to the question "What do you like most about the HSIC Program?" were:

- Lots of people should be in the program that's not in it.

- Students have concern for each other.

- I like the program, period; it's straight.

QUESTION 2. What do you dislike about the HSIC Program?

Questionnaire Responses (Question 2):

Two hundred sixty-nine students responded to the above question. Of these, 70 students (26 percent) said that they didn't dislike anything about the program. The sentence that students typically wrote was, "There's nothing I dislike about the H.S.I.C. program." Other responses were:

- There doesn't seem to be any type of problem that I have with this program.

- Nothing, because there is nothing to dislike about it.

- Nothing, I love it. It's very meaningful. I won't be interested in skipping again because I know school is important now.

Although the teaching staff was the best liked aspect of the program, several students expressed dislike for individual teachers (48 or 18 percent). At one center, for example, the majority of the students were critical of one of the teachers in the program. One student said, "What I don't like about the program is one of the teachers. She doesn't know what she is talking about. She doesn't make any sense at all. I don't think she deserves to be one of our teachers, and the rest of the students (in the program) agree with me."

Examples of critical responses of students from other centers were:

- I dislike being checked on to see if we are in our classes. Another reason is when we don't attend school, they call our parents.

- I don't like _____ because he makes you do too much work.

- The only thing I dislike about the program is that my first hour teacher isn't too straight. She is always picking on me. I know teachers are just trying to get you to learn, but she's too hard on me. Everytime I say something, she's always jumping down my throat. I guess I'll just have to make the best of it but she also needs to stop being so strict.

Twenty-six students (10 percent) were concerned about the limited stay in the program. Several students felt that they should remain in the program for a full year. "This program don't last nothing but six months. I would like to stay a year if they could arrange it," said one student.

Other students (20 percent) were concerned about losing credit hours while attending the HSIC program. Several remarked, "I dislike the hours of credit I am getting. This means that I have to go to summer school."

Other dislikes expressed by students were: the special education class stigma, the location of classrooms, doing too much work, lack of bus tickets, and teachers calling home to check on student absences.

Group Interview Responses (Question 2):

While teachers were the most liked feature of the HSIC Program, they also received the most criticism by students. They complained about teachers "trying to get into your personal business;" "telling us to go to bed early so we will be here on time;" "telling us we need to go to church." "They give lectures everyday, telling you what you are not supposed to be doing." "Teachers are always telling stories about how other students have changed that went through the program; we keep hearing it everyday." Other dislikes directed toward teachers were:

- Some teachers have favorites -- certain students.
- When the teachers come to school with an attitude, they take it out on the students.
- The teachers treat you like babies.

Six students were critical of their classmates. They felt that some of their classmates "talked too much, act silly, ain't doing right, try to take over the teachers." One student said, "All the girls try to crack on the boys. One girl talks about one boy, then all the girls jump in."

Several students said that "The regular teachers treat us like special education students. They act like you got problems, like mental problems, and I get angry. They shouldn't treat you like some mental person." Other student concerns were:

- I don't like the classroom. Our class is next to the machine shop room. We don't have classes in the regular classrooms.
- We can't get the things we want. Wanted a bus, can't get that; wanted a phone, can't get that; wanted a divider for the room, can't get that; can't get nothing.
- Some of the students in the program ain't doing right. Some people in the program don't come. They are taking up space. Somebody else could be in the program. When they do come, they mess around.

QUESTION 3. How has the HSIC Program helped you?

Questionnaire Responses (Question 3):

Forty percent of the student respondents (113 of 287) reported that the HSIC Program helped improve their attendance. The most typical responses were: "It helped improve my attendance," or "It stopped me from skipping." Other typical remarks were:

- I think it is a good attendance program because it is working and students are coming to school.
- I go to classes now, more than I have ever gone.
- I think the program has helped me a whole lot with my attendance and now I just love to come to school.

The second most frequent response focused on self-improvement and understanding (41 responses). Responding students felt that the program had

helped them to be "more responsible and have respect for others," "helped me to figure out my own problems," "helped me to open up to other people and has given me more confidence." Other examples were:

- I am able to deal with my problems better.
- The program helps me understand and shows me what to do when I get in a bad situation.
- It helps me to be positive and to get what I want out of life. It shows me how successful I can be. It showed me how much pride I hope I have in myself, and I know I can make it.

The third most frequent response dealt with improved scholarship (25 responses). Some examples were:

- It has helped me get where I was once before, an "A" student. This program has opened my eyes and made me realize that I wasn't hurting anyone but myself.
- It helped me because my grades have improved. I have an urge to come to school.

Fifteen students stated that the program gave them a "better understanding of how important education is." And seven students stated that the "program helped improve their attitude." More examples were:

- The program helped me learn that school is important and it helped me to learn that I can be successful.
- The HSIC program has helped me get the proper attitude to become a success and attend class like I should. My G.P.A. has risen from 1.8 to a 2.5.

Group Interview Responses (Question 3):

Approximately one-third of the student respondents talked about how much they have changed since being in the HSIC Program. They seemed to be talking "self-improvement." They said that they felt different than they had before, and now they felt good about themselves. They used such terms as "change in attitude," "having a better outlook," "being motivated," and

"having improved understanding." Typical responses were:

- My attitude has changed from being nasty to being nice.
- It gave me a better outlook. I'd rather graduate now than take the GED.
- Once you go to school, you come home and you feel good.
- I would probably begin to commit crimes and would have ended up in Dehoco.

Several students felt that the program helped them "to come back to school more," "go to my classes," and "to get to school on time."

In contrast to the above statements, three students gave negative remarks, saying that the program was not of help to them.

- You don't need anybody to guide you to school. If you want to come, you will come on your own.
- Your parents can't make you come to school. Once you come out of the house they don't know if you have gone to school.
- Ain't helped me. I hate school, period.

Other interesting responses were:

- Things are better at home now that I'm going to school. I don't have to hear my mother fuss anymore.
- I have a cousin that used to skip every time I skipped. Now that I'm going to school he is too.
- I got two "B's" and a "C." I used to get straight "F's."

QUESTION 4. What changes would you make to improve this program?

Questionnaire Responses (Question 4):

Two hundred fifty students responded to the above question. Of those, 48 students did not recommend any changes. One student said, "I don't think that you can improve it anymore because it's just great the way it is." Another student said, "There really aren't any complaints that I have. I think the teachers deserve a gold medal for the interest they take in those

students who try to help themselves." Additional responses were:

- There's no problem needed to be corrected. The program is just perfect. The teachers are very helpful to all of us pupils.

- I really don't recommend anything to improve this program because it made me realize that hanging out is not the solution. The solution for me is graduating out of high school, go to college, graduate from there, then get a good job and have a great future.

Twenty-eight students felt that the program could be improved by permitting the students to remain in the HSIC Program for a longer period of time. The majority of the students suggested a full school year. Some examples were:

- I would recommend that the program last all year around or until you pull your grades up and do much better.

- Have the program all year around, two semesters.

Several students (21) felt that the program should consist of more classes. They complained that they were losing credit hours by being in the program, and would not pass into the next grade unless they go to summer school. For example:

- One, to be in regular classes like other students. Second, an extra class so that we wouldn't be behind in class credits.

- You could improve the program by having more classes like health and history.

Other suggested improvements were: more textbooks and supplies, put out unruly students, longer recess, better discipline by teachers, and more field trips.

Group Interview Responses (Question 4):

Students appeared to have difficulty thinking of ways the program could be improved, and most of their responses were quite varied which resulted in

few statement categories. However, some students felt that the program could be improved by having more students in the classes. They felt that small class sizes gave others the impression that they were special education students. They, the HSIC students, were offended that some teachers and students in the regular classes considered them to be "dumb or stupid."

Other HSIC students felt that they were losing credits by being in the program. They wanted additional classes like history and social studies added to the program. The students said additional classes would increase their credit hours, and they would be able to pass to the next grade without going to summer school.

The third top priority was extending the program to a whole year rather than just one semester. Students felt that they need more time to continue the positive adjustments that they were making during the first semester.

Additional recommendations for improvement were:

- Boost the break time 10 minutes.
- Make people understand that they don't have to fight. Just talk about the problem. Settle it by talking it out.
- Shorter class periods.
- The classes that we failed in the regular school, we should be able to take again in this program.
- Get better classrooms.
- Get more teachers like Mrs. _____ and Mrs. _____.
- Put the students who are mis-using the program out.
- Have more trips.

Summary, Discussion, and Recommendations

The major findings of the evaluation of the 1984-85 High School Intervention Center Program can be summarized as in the following statements.

1. Students' attendance in their regular schools showed no improvement after participation in the program. The average rate of absence before participation was .36 (36 percent). After participation, the average rate of absence was also .36.

2. Student attendance at the centers was better than their regular school attendance. For the sample investigated, the average rate of absence was .22 (22 percent).

3. The program appeared to be successful for 111 students (45 percent) who improved their attendance after treatment. Their pre-treatment average rate of absence was .44 (44 percent). However, after treatment, their average rate was .25.

4. The program appeared not to be successful for 136 students (55 percent) who did not show improvement in attendance after program treatment. Their pre-treatment average rate of absence was .30 (30 percent). After treatment, their average absence rate was .44.

5. The HSIC Program seemed to have little impact on academic achievement. Both pre- and post-treatment grade point averages (.70 and .80, respectively) were below a "D" average (1.0). However, students did better while in the program. The grade point average for the first semester participants was 1.7 ("C-"), somewhat better than the pre- and post-treatment grade point averages.

6. Student responses to questionnaires and group interviews showed that the HSIC staff was highly praised for their efforts to improve student attendance. Students also felt that the counseling process was instrumental in improving students' attitudes and self-concept. However, several students complained that they were losing credit hours by being in the program and, therefore, wanted additional classes added to the curriculum. Many students expressed a high priority for extending the program to a whole year rather than just one semester.

Although the overall findings indicate that there was no improvement in the students' average rate of absence after participation, further analysis of the data show that 45 percent of the participants (111) did show

improvement in attendance. Also, student attendance at the centers was better than their regular school attendance. In addition, students' grade point averages while participating in the centers were somewhat better than their pre and post grade point averages.

The above evidence supports a recommendation that students should be better screened for admittance to the program. The program seems to be better suited for those students who have a severe attendance problem and who complete the treatment. Those students who entered the program with a milder attendance problem tended to do worse after completing the treatment.

Students tended to do better in attendance while participating in the program. This being the case, perhaps the program could be restructured wherein the student could spend part of the time in the program and part of the time taking regular grade classes. This combination might keep the student in school and also satisfy the attainment of credit hours.

The student's family should also play a part in bringing about positive changes in student behavior. Therefore, it would be helpful to the student and parents if a parental training program could be established. This program could include family counseling, teaching parents more appropriate and effective discipline procedures, and mobilizing all the family resources to help students change.

As an outcome of the evidence obtained in the evaluation of the HSIC Program, the following recommendations are urged:

1. It is suggested that the program be restructured whereby all participating students can also take classes in their regular grade.
2. Improve screening and placement of students in the program.
3. Improve screening and placement of teachers in the program.

4. Extend the length of the program to two semesters.

5. School staff in the regular grades should be educated on the purposes of the program.

6. There should be specific time lines for enrollment. Late entries can be detrimental to program cohesiveness.

7. Students who demonstrate poor participation should be dropped after a reasonable time. An attendance policy should be developed for final actions.

8. Develop and establish a family intervention and parental training program.

9. The program should be geared to ninth grade students who have achievement and attendance problems. Over-age students and students with behavior problems should not be permitted in the program.

CAG/fc